

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 AID-05 TRSE-00 EB-07 CU-02

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2778

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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DEPT PASS LABOR, AID/TA/STS

TUNIS FOR PARKSY

BEIRUT FOR REGLABATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, ELAB, KU

SUBJECT: US-KUWAIT LABOR COOPERATION

REF: KUWAIT 1485

1. DURING CALL BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY ON KUWAIT'S NEW MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR, SALEM AL-SABAH (UNTIL RECENTLY KUWAIT'S AMBASSADOR TO US), SUBJECT OF US-KUWAIT COOPERATION IN LABOR AND MANPOWER AFFAIRS WAS DISCUSSED. GENERALLY ANTI-AMERICAN ATTITUDES OF KUWAITI UNIONS AND ANTI-ARAB REPUTATION OF US UNIONS WERE DESCRIBED AS LIMITING DEGREE OF COOPERATION THAT COULD TAKE PLACE. AS CONVERSATION PROGRESSED, HOWEVER, SHEIKH SALEM EXHIBITED INCREASING INTEREST IN EXPLORING POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION.

2. SPECIFICALLY HE ASKED FOR INFORMATION ON LABOR AND MANPOWER PROGRAMS. PARSKY INFORMED HIM THAT MANPOWER COOPERATION WAS ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF US-SAUDI COMMISSION, AND HE STRESSED
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THAT US HAD GREAT DEAL OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN THESE

AREAS THAT COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO KUWAIT. (COMMENT: I HOPE TO SEE SHEKH SALEM PRIOR TO RETURNING TO US NEXT MONTH FOR HOME LEAVE. AT THAT TIME I SHALL LEAVE WITH HIM A REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION OF MATERIALS THAT WE HAVE ON HAND HERE. DEPENDING ON HOW THAT CONVERSATION GOES WE MAY BE REQUIRING ADDITIONAL MATERIAL, AND WE SHALL ADVISE DEPARTMENT.)

3. MINISTER OF LABOR ALSO ENCOURAGED US UNIONS TO INVITE KUWAITI UNION MEMBER(S) TO VISIT US. (COMMENT: MINISTER'S INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING DIRECT UNION-TO-UNION CONTACT IS INTERESTING AND WORTH ENCOURAGING. HOWEVER, GIVEN REALITIES LOCAL UNION ATTITUDES AND OTHER PROBLEMS, WE ARE SKEPTICAL A VISIT FROM A KUWAITI UNION OFFICIAL TO THE US COULD BE ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. MOREOVER, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT IF AN INVITATION FROM A N AMERICAN UNION WAS SPURNED, US UNIONS WOULD BE UPSET OR ANGERED. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY COMMENT DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO MAKE.)

4. NEW MINISTER OF LABOR SAID THAT HE WAS STILL SETTLING INTO HIS JOB AND LARNING ABOUT LABOR SITUATION IN KUWAIT. HE MADE SOME REMARKS WHICH SUGGEST CONCERN OVER THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGNERS ON KUWAITI UNION ATTITUDES. IN GENERAL HE SEEMED TO WARM TO THE IDEA OF COOPERATION WITH THE US ON LABOR AND MANPOWER RELATED PROGRAMS, ALTHOUGH HE SEEMED TO WANT TO AVOID INSERTING GOK INTO CONTACTS EBTWEEN UNIONS HERE AND IN US. WE HOPE TO DEVELOP A DIALOGUE WITH HIM AND TRY TO IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE USEFUL COOPERATION MAY TAKE PLACE.
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